

**Comments provided by Bill Harrison of the Del Puerto Water District  
at the September 10, 1998 Public Meeting  
hosted by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program in Stockton**

My name is Bill Harrison. My comments here tonight will be brief and non-technical but heartfelt. I am the General Manager of the Del Puerto Water District. The District delivers its federally contracted water supplies to some 50,000 acres of prime agricultural lands in San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced Counties from the Delta-Mendota Canal, a feature of the Central Valley Project. Dependent upon the export of Delta water supplies, our landowners and growers have been severely and disproportionately impacted by laws and regulations aimed at Delta protection and restoration. It is past time that the problems surrounding the Bay-Delta environment were responsibly addressed and that solutions were appropriately financed. More importantly, it is time that the burden of protecting the Delta be assumed by all Californians rather than continuing to balance the state's water budget largely on the backs of our CVP Delta-dependent farmers.

These are the best of hydrologic times -- four very wet years in a row. And prior to the recent drought, the District experienced supply shortages only once in its forty-five year history. But beginning in 1990 (and for five out of the last nine years), the District experienced severe drought-related and legislative or regulatory imposed water shortages. In 1993 for example (a 150% of normal hydrological year), the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the disproportionate impacts associated with implementation of the Central Valley Improvement Act south of the Delta resulted in only a 50% water supply to our users. During this same timeframe due to newly imposed legislative and contractual requirements, the District has experienced a 1000% increase in its water costs to its farmers (from \$4.00/AF to \$40.00/AF, including a \$6.00+/AF surcharge dedicated toward environmental restoration efforts).

As a result, District users have become more reliant and dependent upon the availability of limited groundwater supplies to supplement these reduced, unreliable and costly surface water supplies. To protect and maintain these supplies the District has initiated an AB3030 Groundwater Management Plan. To hold down rising water costs, District users have also become some of the most technologically proficient and efficient agricultural water users in the world. The District developed the very first Water Conservation Plan to be approved by the Bureau under CVPIA guidelines and, as a signatory to the AB3616 MOU, is a current member of the Agricultural Water Management Council. We hope that CALFED will recognize and honor these voluntary local commitments. We feel we

are doing our part and believe it is only proper that other uses of water, including environmental uses, be held to similar standards of accountability.

Having experienced such grave difficulties in securing necessary water supplies, we know better than most just how much California relies on the Delta as a source of water. A stable Delta environment is absolutely critical in helping to meet the state's current and growing need for water. CALFED must recognize this dual challenge of restoring the Delta ecosystem and making a long overdue investment in California's water supply system infrastructure, the essential elements in protecting both the state's environment and its economy.

Clearly, the CALFED program must find a way to balance human and environmental needs. The overall success of the program demands that you recognize and ultimately achieve water supply, water quality and infrastructure improvements that are consistent with and pursued with the same degree of effort and commitment as that given to environmental restoration.

Over the past three years, the District has invested many hours and substantial dollars in support of the collaborative CALFED process and we want to be able to support its final recommendations. The District has participated in the process in good faith, believing that the stated principles are, perhaps, the only way of achieving the program's all-important mission and our common objectives. The District recognizes that the CALFED principles of "equitability" and "no significant re-direction of impacts" mean that there must be "give and take" on everyone's part in order to achieve the necessary measure of success. We also recognize that our south of the Delta CVP farmers and landowners have already given more than their fair share in terms of both water and dollars.

In closing, I would state that the challenge and the opportunity to bring decades of conflict, narrow-mindedness and provincial prejudice to a close is both at hand and largely in your hands. With both State and Federal administrations experiencing various degrees of "lameness", agency leadership is now at a premium. There is no doubt in my mind that a balanced agreement negotiated in good faith among CALFED agencies and stakeholders that is supported by science, law and policy is not only achievable, but is the only proper course of action.

Thank you.